

**PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT
(LIBRARY)**

Accn. No..... Class No.....

Class No.....

The book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below.

QUATRAINS OF
OMAR KHAYYAM

QUATRAINS OF
OMAR KHAYYAM
IN ENGLISH PROSE
By JUSTIN HUNTLY
McCARTHY

LONDON: DAVID NUTT
270-271 STRAND 1898

TO CECILIA

*The Wine of Life, the Wonder of the Spring,
The passionate madness of the Nightingale
Whose Litany all lovers' lips must wail
"Farewell, farewell, farewell to everything"—
These Omar sang, and these myself shall sing
In dreams beside some stream where tulips sail,
Red Argosies, before the scented gale,
While you recline on Cæsar's dust and string
Your lute through all the languid afternoon
To Persian airs of Desert and of Palm,
Of green Oasis and of Gardens sweet
With roses, where the magic of the moon
In silver steeps the consecrated calm
And on the enchanted sward our shadows meet.*

XXII.X.XCVIII

OMAR KHAYYAM was born at Naishapur in Khorassan in the later half of our eleventh century, and died there within the first quarter of the next century. He took his modest surname of Khayyam, the Tentmaker, from his father's trade. He was an astronomer, a mathematician, a poet. Seven hundred years after his death a manuscript of some of his quatrains came into the hands of an English country gentleman who was pleasing his scholarly leisure with the study of Persian. Mr. Edward Fitzgerald's verses have made the thoughts of Omar Khayyam a possession for ever of the English speech.

•

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

A VOICE came at dawn from the wine-shop,
crying, "Arise, ye haunters of the tavern, arise,
and fill the cannikin before fate comes to fill
the cup of your being."

BEHOLD the dawn. Rise, boy, and fill with red
wine the white vessel, for you may seek here-
after, and seek in vain, this one fair hour which
a world of shadows lends you.

SEIZE the cup in your hand as soon as the
yellow dawn appears. Truth is sharp, it has
been said, in the mouth of mankind ; for this
cause it may be that wine is very truth.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

BEHOLD, the dawn arises. Rejoice in the present moment with a cup of crimson wine in your hand. As for honour and fame, let that brittle glass be dashed to pieces against the earth.

THE dawn arises, O fountain of delights. Drink your wine and touch your lute, for the life of the sleeper is brief ; and of those who have gone hence not one will come back again.

WE have wine, and the well-beloved, and the morning, my cupbearer. Not from us comes renunciation, my cupbearer. How long will you tell the tales of old, my cupbearer ? Bring me sweetly the peace of the soul, my cupbearer.

CHILD of the four and five, are you puzzled by the four and five ? Drink deep, for I have told you time on time that, once departed, you return no more.

THE time is come when the earth begins

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

to burgeon ; when the blossoms make the branches white as the hand of Moses ; when the plants quicken with the breath of Jesus, and the clouds open their eyes to weep.

THE season of roses is nigh, when it delights me to defy the law with budding tulip-cheeks. For a season of five days our cups shall convert the grass into beds of tulips.

PLACE the wine-cup in my hand, for my heart is on fire, and life slips from us like quicksilver. Arise, my beloved, for the favour of fortune is but a juggling dream—arise, for the flame of youth flows like the water of the torrent.

A DRAUGHT of wine is better than the empire of Jamshid. The perfume of wine is better than the gifts of Hatim Tai. The sigh which slips at dawning from the breast of the drunkard is better than the lamentations of Majnun.

WERE you as wise as Aristotle, as potent as Roman Cæsar or monarch of Cathay, I should

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

bid you drink in the cup of Djemshid, for the grave is the end of all. Were you Bahram himself, the tomb is your final abode.

TO-DAY the weather is pleasant, it is neither hot nor cold. The dew washes the dust from the face of the roses, and the nightingale says to the yellow flowers, "Ye must drink wine."

WITHOUT wine I cannot live. Without the wine-cup I cannot lift the load of life. I am the slave of that hour when the cupbearer bids me drain yet another cup and I cannot.

FROM year's end to year's end let the lucky lover be drenched in wine and garbed in shame. When we are sober sorrow seeks us from all quarters, but when we are drunk we deride fortune.

THE march of springs and autumns sweep the leaves from our life's tree. Drink wine, friend, for the wise have wisely said, "Life is a poison, and wine its antidote."

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

THANK God, the hour of roses has arrived.
From my heart I delight in the thought of
breaking the law. For many a day I mean to
dally with lovely girls, and to turn the green
meadow to a tulip-bed by the libation of my
wine.

SINCE life flies, what matter whether it be sweet
or bitter ? Since the soul must escape, what
matter whether it be at Naishapur or Babylon ?
Drink, then, for long after you and I are dust,
the moon will pass from her last to her first
quarter, and from her first to her last.

How many men do I behold sleeping in ignorance
upon this earth, how many buried in its
bosom ! When I survey this desert of nothing-
ness, how many souls do I see who have
not yet arrived—how many who have already
departed !

I SAW upon the walls of Thous a bird perched
before the skull of Kai Khosrou. The bird
said unto the skull, “Alas ! what has become of
the gear of thy glory and the triumph of thy
trumpets ?”

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

BELOVED, it is dawn. Sing your song and drink your wine, for the long array of months has overthrown a thousand kings like Djemshid and Kai Khosrou.

A SUP of wine is better than the kingdom of Kai Khosrou and the throne of Kai Kobad or Thous. The sighs with which a lover disturbs the dawn are softer than the howlings of hypocrites.

I REJOICE to drown my reason in wine : our sessions are met for the service of the wine-cup. O hermit of the heart, do not, in your pilgrimage, deny yourself the cup. Be like us who are wine worshippers, and delight in the lip of the lover.

WHEN I gaze, I seem to see the fields, the streams of Paradise. Earth, freed from winter's hell, seems turned to heaven. Rest with some fair face in this fair place.

WHEN the hand holds a wheaten loaf, flesh, and a flagon of wine in fellowship with tulip-cheeks

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

in some lonely spot, behold such delight as is not given to all sultans.

IN spring I love to sit in the meadow with a golden girl and a jar of wine, and though I may be blamed for this, yet hold me lower than dog if ever I dream of Paradise.

GET dancing girls, wine, and a mistress as fair as the houris, if any houris there be. Seek out a stream gushing by a meadow, if any meadow there be. Plague yourself no more, for there is no better Paradise than this, if any Paradise there be.

KING, my king, how many a man like me in the rose-fair fellowship of dancers and drinkers stands aloof, an onlooker ? A garden, a wine-jar, and a lute are sweeter than Paradise with its streams and houris.

WHILE I searched the book of love, a wise voice whispered, " Happy is he who holds in his house a girl more lovely than the moon, and dreams of a night-time longer than a year."

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

GIVE me a jug of wine, a book of verses, a loaf of bread, and a little idleness. If with such store I might sit by your dear side in some lonely place, I should count myself happier than a king in his kingdom.

FOLK talk of Paradise where houris dwell, where the heavenly river runs, where wine and honey abound. Bah ! Fill me quick a cup of wine, and put it in my hand, for one present pleasure is worth a thousand future joys.

THE rose said, "I am the Yusuf flower, for my mouth is full of gold and jewels." I said, "If you are the Yusuf flower, show me a sign thereof." And she made answer, "Perchance that I am garbed in a blood-drenched garment."

BELOVED, before care seizes you, bid them serve us with rose-red wine. You are not made of gold, thoughtless fool, that you should hope to be dug up after you are laid in the earth.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

GIVE not yourself to sorrow and to grief in the hope of gaining money in the end. Enjoy yourself with your companions before your warm breath grows cold, for your enemies will feast in your room when you have gone.

THIS battered caravanserai which men call the world, this shifting home of light and night, is but the fag-end of a feast of a hundred such lords as Jamshid. It is but a tomb serving as a pillow for the sleep of a hundred such kings as Bahram.

THE palace where Bahram revelled is now the covert of stags, the lair of lions. See how this Bahram who loved to snare the wild ass is snared himself in his turn by the tomb.

BEFORE you or I were born, there were dawns and twilights, and it was not without design that the stars were set in their courses. Be careful, then, how you tread upon this dust, for it was once, no doubt, the apple of some fair girl's eye.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

How fair are the fringes of the stream ! Surely they sprang once from the lip of some beauty. Trample them not with scorn, for they spring from the dust of a tulip-tinted face.

OH that by this road we might arrive at a place to rest ! oh that after a hundred thousand years we might spring like the grass from the heart of the green earth !

O CUPBEARER, since time lurks to shatter you and me, this world can never be a dwelling for you and me. But come what may, be sure that God is in our hands while this cup of wine stands between you and me.

LET us renew the round of pleasure. Let us disdain the round of prayer. Wherever the flagon is to be found, there also you may see, like the neck of the flagon, our throats stretched out to the cup.

O my friend, let us forget to-day and to-morrow, in this one short hour of life. To-morrow we shall leave this house, to-morrow we shall

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

be as those who peopled yesterday's seven thousand years.

MAY I always hold a brimming flagon ! May my love never wane for those fair girls. Folk say, God bids you renounce these joys ; but if He gave me such an order, I should not obey it. Perish the thought !

How long will you complain vainly against the order of the earth ? Arise, and quicken every moment with joy. While the world offers so many meadows, drink your wine from a brimming cup.

THIS world holds nought but shadows and phantasms. He is indeed unlucky who loses his way in them. Rest, friend, drink your wine, open your heart to mirth, and free yourself thus from all these shadows and phantasms.

YOU should not plant the tree of bitterness in your heart, but rather read at all times in the book of joy. You should drink your wine and

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

pursue your heart's desire, for the length of
your stay on this earth is quickly measured.

NO longer, O reason, will I be your slave : why
should I care if in this world fifty years or but
one day is left to me ? Let us drink wine from
the jar before we ourselves become jars in the
house of the potter.

FOLLOW in the footsteps of the revellers, abide
in the tavern, think only of wine, women, and
song. With cup and can, O well-beloved,
drink, and cease to babble of vain things.

THOSE who dwell among the tombs have be-
come dust and ashes, scattered to the four winds.
Alas ! what drink is this with which mankind
is filled, and which enchantς him thus until the
day of judgment ?

ENJOY life while it lingers, for many other way-
farers will journey through the world. The soul
cries out after the body has been torn from it,
and the crown of your head will be trampled
under the feet of potters.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

I MET a sage in a drunkard's house, and asked him tidings of the absent ones. He answered, "Drink your wine, for many like us have gone, and not returned again."

RISE and come hither, and for mine heart's ease solve at least one problem. Bring quickly here a jar of mellow wine that we may drink our fill before folk make flagons of our clay.

HEART, my heart, since this world grieves you, since your soul must soon be sundered from your body, rest in the grassy fields, and make merry before other grasses spring from your dust.

REJOICE, for the time comes when all whom you see now shall be hidden in the earth. Drink wine, and let not the cares of this world overwhelm you. Those who come after you will too soon become their prey.

SURRENDER yourself to enjoyment, for sorrow is without end. The stars will assemble in the heavens in their former courses, and of the

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

bricks which men make from your body will they build palaces for others.

DAFF aside the cares of life, be merry in this momentary being. If Heaven had been constant in its gifts to others, remember that you could never have taken their turn of enjoyment.

THIS wheel of Heaven seeks my doom and yours ; it plots against my soul and yours. Come, seat yourself upon the grass, for soon fresh grass will spring from this dust of mine and yours.

DEAREST, while we tread this earth, lift the jar and drink its wine ; ere the potter turns to shape from your dust and mine other jars for other lips, fill my cup and empty yours.

TAKE cup and flagon in your hands, beloved. Let us hasten to the fields and streams, for many girls as golden as the moon have been turned by time into cups and flagons.

WHEN our blood beats with the mirth of the

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

green earth, when the steeds of the sun gallop over the green earth, I love to wander with golden girls upon the green earth, making merry together before we all turn to green earth.

NO false money passes with us. The broom has swept clean our home. An old man coming from the tavern said to me, "Friend, drink wine, for many lives will follow yours during your long sleep."

MY being is attracted by the sight of fair faces red as the rose. My heart delights in the cup of wine. I wish to enjoy the joy of my body before it falls into its native dust.

DRINK your wine in the fellowship of fair girls. When you are bitten by the serpent of sorrow, drink the antidote. If you will not drink, what would you that I should do ? Go, fool, and eat the earth.

DRINK with a witty fellowship, drink with fair women with smiling lips and tulip-tinted cheeks.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Drink not too deep, do not babble about it.
Drink; but drink discreetly and in peace.

SINCE we have no sure home in this world, it were folly to refuse wine and caresses. Cease, man of peace, your vain reasoning on creation and eternity: what to me will be this world's antiquity or newness when I am no longer here?

SOME ponder on religion and belief, some swing bewildered between doubt and knowledge. Suddenly the watcher cries, "Fools! your road is not here nor there."

THE elect of the world, who by their learning climb the heights of heaven, and scale the firmament in their search after wisdom, lose their wits, seized with dizziness and all amazement.

No man has pierced the secret. No man has ever passed a step outside himself. I watch and I observe only imperfection from pupil

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

to master—only imperfection in all that is born
of woman.

I HAVE flown like a bird from this world of wonders, in the hope of reaching a higher Heaven. But, fallen again to earth, and finding none worthy of my secret heart, I have gone forth again by the door through which I came.

NO one has ever drawn aside the veil of fate. To no one are the secrets of divinity made known. For seventy-two years I have thought thereon by day and night, but I have learned nothing, and the riddle remains unread.

SINCE life seldom gives us our hearts' desire, what is the good of all our hopes and all our strivings ? Our spirits are always sad, always are we saying in sighing, “ We came too late, we must depart too soon.”

ALTHOUGH my body may be comely, and its odour sweet, although my colour may rival the tulip, and my figure shame the cypress, it is

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

not clear to me why the heavenly Master has deigned to paint me on this world.

FIRSTLY life was given unto us without our consent, and our existence filled us with astonishment. Lastly, with regret we lapse out of this world, understanding neither the purpose of our coming, our stay, nor our departure.

THIS captain-jewel comes from an unknown mine. This perfect gem is stamped with an unknown seal. All our questions are vain, for the riddle of perfect love is written in an unknown tongue.

THIS world has gained nothing by my presence and its glory will not dwindle with my departure. I have never heard, and have never been told, the reason of my coming or going.

YESTERDAY I saw in the bazaar a potter smiting with all his force the clay he was kneading. The earth seemed to cry out to him, "I also was such as thou—treat me, therefore, less harshly."

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

THE secret of eternity is far from you and me.
The key to the enigma is unknown to you and me.
Behind the veil is speech of you and me.
But if the veil be rent, what happens to you
and me ?

DRINK wine, for the far-seeing will find that in
the eyes of the Deity the act is of small account.
God from all time has foreseen that I should
drink wine. If I drank not, this foresight would
become ignorance, or I should not fulfil this
foresight.

THE Koran, which men call the Holy Word, we
read only from time to time and not steadfastly.
On the lip of the cup there runs a luminous
verse which we love to read always.

ONE night in dreams a wizard said, "In sleep
the rose of joy has never bloomed. Why do
you do a deed so like to death ? Arise, and
drink wine, for you will sleep sound enough
beneath the earth."

THIS jar has been, like me, a creature, loving
and unhappy. It has sighed for the tresses of

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

some tender girl. That handle by which you hold it now was once an arm to linger fondly round some fair one's neck.

LAST night I broke my cup against a stone, drunk in the doing of this foolish deed. Me thought the cup protested piteously, "I was like you ; you will be like to me."

I PASSED hard by where a potter kneaded earth, and I saw what the potter did not see, that it was my father's dust which lay in the palm of the potter.

THE ceaseless potters who plunge their hands in the clay, who give all their mind to moulding it, how long will they continue to smite it with their hands ? Do they not consider that it is the mould of mankind they treat thus ?

O POTTER, how long will you degrade the clay of man ? It is the finger of Feridoun, it is the hand of Kai-Khosrou, that you turn upon the wheel. What are you thinking of ?

ALTHOUGH wine be forbidden, do not deny

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

yourself drink at morning and eventide, to the sound of song and to the music of the lute. When you have obtained red wine, pour one drop on the earth, and drink the rest.

COPY the tulip, that flames with the new year. Take like the tulip the cup in your hand, and drink your wine in gladness to a tulip-tinted girl. For Heaven's wheel may at any moment dash you down.

LONG time I wasted all my wit to find a moment's halting-place in this shifting world, and lo ! I learn that the moon is but a spangle beside your beauty, that the cypress seems a monster by your slender form.

LET us abandon the search after the unattainable, and give ourselves up to the joys of the present, to touching the long tresses trembling to the melodies of the lute.

THOUGHTLESS man, be not deceived by this world, since you know its vanity ! Throw not your life to the wind. Hasten to seek your lover, and delay not to drink your wine.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

WHEN you are with some cypress-slender rose-tinted girl, do not shun the flowers of the meadow, do not drop the cup from your hand before the angel of death, like the wild wind that scatters the rose leaves, rends the veil of your existence.

DRINK wine, before your name be blotted from the world, for when wine flows into your heart, care will depart. Unbind the tresses of the loved one's hair before your own sinews are unbound.

FLY from the lessons of learning, toy with the tresses round the angel face, spill the blood of the vine in your cup before time spills your blood on the earth.

MY span of life slips by in few days. It passes like the wind of the desert. Therefore, so long as one breath of life is left to me, there are two days with which I shall never vex my spirit—the day that has not yet come, and the day that has gone by.

WE drink old wine and new wine ; we would

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

sell the world for a brace of barleycorns.
Do you know where you go after death ?
Give me some wine, and go where you please.

OUR being must be blotted from the book of life, we must lie in the arms of death. O enchanting cupbearer, bring me the liquor joyfully, since I must become earth.

AT the moment when my soul shall be delivered, when the leaves shall be scattered from the tree of my life, then with what joy shall I pass out of this world before my dust is passed through the sieve of the builder !

SAD soul, since it is your doom to be stabbed by sorrow, since nature vexes every day with a new torment, tell me, my soul, why you abide in my body, since you must one day quit it ?

SINCE we must needs go hence, what is the use of being ? Why should we strive after the unattainable ? Since for some unknown reason we may not abide here, why should we be so heedless of our voyage to come ?

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

HEART, my heart, if you free yourself from earth you will become soul, and scale the skies. Then what a shame and sorrow to have dwelt on earth.

YOU ask the meaning of this world's phantasmagoria. To expound the whole of it would be a work without end. It is a vision, which rises from a boundless ocean, and sinks again into the same ocean from which it arose.

KHAYYAM, your body is like a tent, the soul is its sultan, and his last home is nothingness. When the sultan quits his pavilion, the dark Ferrash strikes it, to set it up at another stage.

O KHAYYAM, although the wheel of Heaven has closed the door to discussions, nevertheless the eternal cupbearer has formed in the cup of creation a thousand other Khayyams like unto you.

SINCE every night, every day, dwindleth your life, let not these nights and days heap you with dust. Daff them aside, for, alas ! what a

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

world of time you will be hence while nights
and days still wax and wane.

ALAS ! how long the time will be when we are no longer in this world, and the world will still persist. There will remain of us neither fame nor trace. The world was not imperfect before we came ; it will be in no wise changed when we depart.

How many nights has sleep shunned our eyelids before parting has sundered our hearts ! Arise, my beloved, and let us live for an instant before dawn breathes upon us. Alas ! how long it will breathe when our breath is spent.

WHEN my soul and yours have flitted, they will place a couple of bricks upon my grave and yours, then to make bricks for other tombs they will send to the kiln my dust and yours.

THOUGH you have wandered upon the face of the earth, all that is nothing. Though you have seen much, though you have heard much,

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

all that is nothing. Though you travel from world's end to world's end, all that is nothing. Though you abide in a corner of your house, all that is nothing.

THIS caravan of life moves on strangely—beware, friend, for thus your pleasure flies from you. Trouble not, therefore, for the grief which awaits our friends on the morrow, for behold how the night passes away !

WHY, my friend, puzzle over the problem of existence ? Why trouble your heart and soul with idle questioning ? Live your life in joy, for after all your advice was not asked in the ordering of human affairs.

THE very hills would leap for joy did you but wash their steeps with wine. Only a fool is scornful of the flagon. You who bid me renounce the juice of the vine, learn that wine is the soul of man.

NOW Thou art hidden from all things, now Thou art displayed in all things. It is for Thy own

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

delight that Thou workest these wonders, being
at once the sport and the spectator.

IF the heart could know the secrets of life and death, it would know the secrets of God. If to-day, when you are yourself, you know nothing, what shall you know to-morrow, when you are yourself no more ?

You cannot be sure that you shall behold to-morrow. Even to think upon to-morrow is madness. If your heart is awake, do not waste this little hour of life, for there is no knowing how long it shall be with you.

LET not the fear of things to be sallow your cheek. Let not things present chill you with fear. Taste in this place of shadows your share of delight, and do not wait until Heaven's gifts are snatched away from you.

You who drink no wine, blame not the bibbers, for I would rather renounce heaven than the juice of the grape. Men plume themselves upon this false glory of temperance, but commit

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

deeds a thousand times worse than honest
drunkenness.

QUESTION me not upon the vanities of this world nor of the things that yet may be. Think of this present hour as plunder from destiny. Vex not yourself about the past, nor plague me about the future.

How long will you afflict your soul with the failure of your ambitions ? Trouble is their lot who take care for the future. Pass life in joy, therefore, and give no heed to the ways of the world, since wine will in no wise increase the bitterness of your woes.

PUT wisdom by, and clasp the cup. Cease to perplex yourself about heaven and hell. Barter your turban for wine and have no fear. Pluck off that silken headgear—content your head with a woollen cap.

WITH one beloved for my companion, that which delights me is a cup of wine. When my heart brims with grief, my eyes flow a foun-

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

tain of tears. Alas ! since our sad world is of short duration, all that is left for us is to pass our life in drunkenness.

SINCE you own only that which hath been vouchsafed to you, yield not your heart to covetousness. Do not cherish the things of this world, for at the end of the play you will have to leave all and go away.

How long will you spend your life in self-love, or in searching for the source of being and of not being ? Drink wine, then, for since your life must be followed by death, you had best pass it in sleep or in drunkenness.

Do not desire the things of this world. If you would live happy, break the bonds which bind you to earthly joys and sorrows. Be content, for the stars move in their course, and your life is short.

How long will these wrangle on the five and four, my cupbearer ? It is as hard to understand one as one hundred thousand, my cup-

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

bearer ; we are but earth, so tune the lute, my
cupbearer ; we are but air, bring wine, my
cupbearer !

MY friend, dwell tranquil in your day, nor
grieve for fleeting time in vain. When the
robe of life is rent, it matters little what you
have done, what you have said, or in what
way you have been stained.

IN this house of life, philosopher, drink wine.
So every atom of your dust which the wind
shall carry will fall drenched in wine on the
threshold of the tavern.

I WILL pour wine into a cup which contains a
full measure. Two cups will content me, but
I will immediately three times divorce from me
religion and reason, and wed the daughter of
the vine.

Do not admit vain thoughts through the gate
of your mind. Drink while the years drift, let
the cup be always full with delight, woo the
daughter of the vine, for it is better to enjoy the
forbidden daughter than the permitted mother.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

SINCE the wheel of fate has never been your friend, why should you heed whether the heavens be seven or eight ? There are, I say again, two days for which I take no thought—the day which has not come, and the day which has gone for ever.

DO not ponder over the passing day. Do not mourn for unborn to-morrow. Do not build on the future and the past. Take your fair hour, and do not fling your life to the wind.

YESTERDAY, reeling before the tavern door, I beheld an old drunken man shouldering a vessel full of wine. I said to him, “Old man, do you not fear God ?” He answered, “There is mercy with Him—go therefore and drink.”

ONCE, seeing an old man reel from the tavern with prayer-mat and flagon, I said to him, “What means this, O my master ?” and he made answer to me, “Drink wine, my brother, for this world is but a breath of wind.”

LAST night, in the tavern, my heart’s friend held out the cup and bade me drink of it.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

"I will not drink," I said ; and my heart's friend entreated " Drink, for my love's sake."

THE strife of creeds has divided mankind into seventy-two kingdoms. Of all these doctrines I have chosen that of thy love. Of what meaning are the words Piety, Impiety, Faith, Sin? Thou art my sole desire. Far from me be these pretences.

DRINK wine, for therein you shall find forgetfulness for all your meditations on the problems of the earth. Renounce not this alchemy, for if you drink but one measure thereof, it will scatter to the winds your ceaseless cares.

SINCE the day brings with it a sense of youth, I mean to delight my heart with wine. Do not blaspheme this juice for its bitter-sweet, for it is sweet to drink, and bitter only because it is my life.

THOU hast planted desire in our hearts, and at the same time forbidden us to satisfy it. In what a strait do you find yourself, O unhappy man, between this desire and this denial ? It

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

is as if you were ordered to turn down the cup without spilling the contents.

DRINK of the wine which gives eternal life. Drink, for it is the fountain of youth. It burns like a flame, but, like the water of life, it dispels sorrow—therefore drink.

IN Heaven's name, who does the philosopher yearn for the trophies of this House of Many Sorrows ? Let him who calls me drunkard clear his eyes and tell me if he sees on high even the sign of a tavern.

WINE is forbidden, but it is only forbidden to him who makes no measure of what he drinks, and the one with whom he drinks. All the conditions observed, will not the wise man drink ?

IN mosque, in school, in church, in synagogue men dread hell and desire Paradise ; but the seed of uncertainty has never sprouted in the soul of him who has guessed the secrets of the All-wise.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

I AM worthy neither of heaven nor of hell. God knows from what clay He fashioned me. I am as heretical as a dervish, as foul as a harlot. I have neither faith nor wealth, nor hope of Paradise.

I KNOW not if He who created me belongs to Paradise or hell, but I know that a cup of wine, a fair girl, and a lute on the borders of a pleasant land, rejoice my heart in this hour, and that you live on the promise of a Paradise to come.

To drink and delight in fair faces is wiser than to wear a hypocritical faith. If all the lovers and all the joyous drinkers go to hell, nobody will want to go to Paradise.

NO one has passed, no one shall pass, behind the veil that masks the secrets of God. There is no other dwelling-place for us than the bosom of the earth. Woe's me that the stay should be so short.

FLING dust to the skies, and drink deep of wine. Seek ever the fairest women. To what

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

end do you pray for pardon, seeing that of all those departed hence not one has returned ?

OF all who have gone on the long journey, who has come back, that I may ask him tidings ? My friends, let nought go by in the hope of hopes, for, be sure, you will not come back again.

THAT secret wheel of Heaven has slain a thousand monarchs and a thousand favourites ; drink your wine, then, for it gives back life to none. Alas ! no one of those that quit this world will ever come back to it.

WOE's me for the best that slips between our fingers. Woe's me for all the hearts that death has drowned in blood. Woe's me that none return from the hither world with tales of those who have departed thence.

DO not heed the speech of the frivolous, but seize the cup of wine from the hands of the comely. All who ever trod the earth have vanished, and who can say that one has e'er returned ?

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

THIS world is but a hair's breadth in our life.
The soul but the trace of tears and blood. Hell
is but a shadow of the toils we take upon our-
selves. Heaven is but the moment's rest we
sometimes taste.

MAN is a flagon and his soul is the wine there-
in. His body is a reed, and his soul is the
sound therein. What is earthly man, O Khay-
yam, but a paper lantern of dreams and a flame
therein ?

THIS vault of heaven, under which we move in
shadow, may be likened unto a magic lantern ;
the sun is the flame, and we, like the figures,
live there in amazement.

HERE, below, we are only puppets for the
pleasure of the wheel of heaven. We are, in
truth, but pieces on this chessboard of life,
which in the end we leave, only to drop one by
one into the grave of nothingness.

Do not beat at every door. We must learn to
take the good with the bad, for we can only

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

play the game of life by the dots on the dice
which destiny throws into the hollow of this
heavenly cup.

ALL things that be were long since written
upon the book of life. Heaven's pen has
nothing to do with good or evil. God set on
fate its necessary seal, and all our efforts are
but vanity.

HEART, my heart, since the way of the world is
but a fable, why do you adventure in such a
waste of sorrows ? Trust to fate, go your ways,
for what the pen has traced will not be oblite-
rated for you.

THOU hast made me of earth and water ; how
can I alter it ? Thou hast woven me of wool
or of silk ; how can I alter it ? Thou has pre-
destined my good deeds and evil deeds ; how
can I alter it ?

ASCRIBE not to the wheel of heaven the
thousand woes and thousand weals which are
the portion of man, for this wheel, my friend,

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

revolves more helpless than thyself along the highway of heaven.

O KHAYYAM, when you are drunk, be merry. When you are with your mistress, be merry. Since the end of the world is nothingness, think that you are not, and while you are, be merry.

IF you surrender yourself up to your insatiable desire, I prophesy that you will go hence as a beggar. See rather what you are and whence you come, learn what you are and whither you go.

BE wary, friend, for you will lose your soul, you will pass behind the curtain of the secrets of Heaven. Drink, for you know not whence you came. Drink, for you know not where you go.

WHEN the celestial steed of stars was saddled, when the planets and the constellations were created—on that same day the divan of fate decreed our lot. How, then, can we be held

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

accountable for a position that has been made
for us ?

I WOULD rather whisper in the tavern with you
than pray aloud in the temple without you.
This, truly, O Creator of past, present, and
future, is my faith ; whether Thou castest me
into the flames, or cheerest me with the light
of Thy countenance.

EVERY heart in which Heaven hath set the
lamp of love, whether that heart turn to temple
or tavern, if its name be written in the book of
love, is freed from fear of hell and hope of
Paradise.

CEASE to condemn the frequenters of the
tavern, O foolish devotee. While you are busy
with your beads we follow the desires of our
hearts, with the cup in our hand and the loved
one beside us.

THOU hast stamped us with a strange seal, Thou
hast made us do dread deeds. How can I be
better than I am, for such as I am you drew
me from the void ?

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

THOU settest many snares around us, and sayest, "Death to ye if ye enter therein." Thou layest the lures Thyself, and then givest over Thy victim to doom.

O THOU who commandest the quick and the dead, who movest the wheel of heaven, what if I am evil, am I not Thy slave ? Which, then, is the guilty one ? Art Thou not Lord of all ?

WHAT man on earth has never sinned ? Who could live and never sin ? If, therefore, because I do ill you punish me by ill, where is the difference between Thee and me ?

IF from the first you made me know myself, why after would you cleave me from myself ? If from the first you purposed to abandon me, why did you hurl me helpless into this world ?

O KHAYYAM, why such sorrow for your sin ? What pleasure can you find in thus plaguing yourself ? He who has never sinned can never taste the sweet of forgiveness. Mercy was made for the sake of sin ; therefore, why are you afraid ?

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

WHEN God built up my body out of clay, He knew beforehand the fruit of all my deeds. It is not in defiance of His will that I have sinned. Why, then, should hell await me ?

HAS Thy empire gained in glory by my service, O Lord my God ? has Thy grandeur suffered by my sins ? Forgive, God, and punish not, for I know that you punish late and pardon early.

IT is said that there will be judgment at the last day, and that the Master will be angry. But from the eternal goodness good alone can proceed. Fear not, therefore, for you shall find mercy at the last.

YOU, who have burned, who burn, who deserve still to burn, why do you call on God to pardon Omar ? What has God to do with you ? How dare you appeal to His pity ?

THOU hast shattered my winejug, O Lord ; Thou hast shut against me the door of delight, O Lord ; thou hast spilt my wine upon the

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

earth ; earth be in my mouth unless Thou art drunk, O Lord.

I AM what Thy power fashioned. I have lived my years in Thy gifts and grace. I would live yet more years of sin, and see at the end if my faults or Thy pity be the greater.

I PASSED into the potter's house of clay, and saw the wheelman busy at his wheel, turning out pots and jars from the heads of kings and the feet of beggars.

WHO can believe that He who made the cup would dream of destroying it ? All those fair faces, all those lovely limbs, all those desirable bodies, what love has made them, and what hate destroys them ?

YESTERDAY I visited the shop of a potter ; there I beheld many thousand pots, some speaking, and some holding their peace. Each one seemed to say to me, "Where then is the potter, where the buyer of pots, where the seller ? "

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

WHEN the tree of my life is uprooted, when my bones are scattered, let them make pitchers of my dust, and fill those pitchers with wine ; thus shall the dust be quickened again.

ON the day when, with head thrown back, I fall at the feet of death, and the destroying angel makes me like a bird without feathers, oh, then see that of my dust a flagon is formed, for who can say but that the odour of the wine may rekindle my clay ?

WHEN I am dead, wash me with the blood of the vine. Instead of prayers sing over my tomb songs of wine and flagons. If you seek me at the latter day, look for me in the dust upon the tavern threshold.

MY dear companions, pour wine to make my face clear with the colour of rubies. When I am dead, wash me in wine, and make my bier of the wood of the vine.

WHEN I am dead, level my tomb to the earth without delay, and make me in this wise an

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

example to mankind. Then knead the ashes of my body with wine, and make thereof the cover of a jar.

THE day when I shall no longer know myself, and when they speak of me as a tale that is told, then my heart's desire is that from my ashes may be formed a wine jar for the tavern.

IF you are indeed my friends, silence vain discourse, and soften my sorrows with wine. When I am dust, mould of my dust a brick, and place that brick in some gap in the walls of a tavern.

I WISH to drink so deep of wine that its fragrance may hang about the soil where I shall sleep, and that revellers, dizzy from yesterday's revel, shall fall dead drunk on visiting my tomb.

KHAYYAM, who sewed the tents of learning, has fallen suddenly into the furnace of despair, and there lies ashes. The knife of fate has cut his

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

thread, and the impatient world has sold him for a song.

ONCE you are in the tavern, you can only make your ablutions with wine. When your name has been befouled there, you cannot cleanse it. Bring hither the wine, therefore, since the covering of our shame has been rent beyond repair.

WHEN I am drunk the world might roll like a ball into a hole, and I should care no more than for a barleycorn. Yestere'en I pawned myself at the tavern for a stoup of wine. "Lo, what an excellent gage !" said the tapster.

WE have broken all our vows, we have closed the gates of reputation. Do not blame us for being fools in our folly, for we are drunk with the wine of love.

EVERY morn I say, This shall be the night of repentance, repentance for the flagon and for the flowing cup. Yet now that the season of

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

roses has come, set me free from repentance, O
Lord of Repentance !

WHEN my being seemed to turn to prayer and
fasting, I dreamed that I was about to touch
the goal of my desires ; but, alas ! a breath has
blown away my prayers and a measure of wine
has set my fasts aside.

DRINK while the wine moistens the sides of the
jar. How often need I say that I have broken
all my vows ? Yet it is better to break the
seals of a hundred oaths than to break the
sides of a jar of wine.

DO not forswear your store of wine, for many
a repentance will follow such a sacrifice. The
roses shed their petals, the nightingales sing
their songs : would it be wise in such an hour
to forswear the flagon ?

ALTHOUGH this quintessence of wine can take
a thousand shapes, now an animal, now a
plant, do not believe that it can ever cease to
be, for the reality remains when the shadows
disappear.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

ONE cup of wine is worth a hundred hearts, a hundred faiths ; one cup of wine is more than the empire of kings ! What may truly be named before it ? Its bitterness is beyond all the sweets of life.

A NIGHTINGALE, straying into a garden and beholding the roses smiling and the cup filled with wine, flew to my ear and sang, "Be wise, friend : there is no recalling the vanished life."

ALAS ! the book of my youth closes, the kindly spring of our joys goes by, and that delightful bird, whose name is Youth, has flown. It came, I know not whence, and goes, I know not whither.

I WOULD that God remoulded the world, and that I might see the work begun. I would that God blotted my name from the roll of fate, or of His mercy made life seem more fair.

IF I, like God, were monarch of the heavens, I would sweep them from the world, and shape

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

**new skies beneath which a free man might have
his heart's desire.**

**SINCE no man dares play prophet for to-
morrow, hasten to lift your heavy-laden heart.
Drain, O delightful moon, a crimson cup, for
heaven's moon will wheel a weary while and
fail to find us.**

**THE light of the moon has rent the robe of
night. Drink wine, therefore, for you will
never find a moment so precious. Give your-
self up to joy, for this same moon will light
long after us the face of the earth.**

**BEHOLD, the dawn has torn aside the veil of
night. Rise, then, and empty the morning's
cup. Drink, sad heart, for dawns will follow
with their faces turned to us when our faces
shall be turned to the earth.**

**THOSE who have spurned the earth beneath
their feet, who have wandered over the world
in the pursuit of gain, have never learned the
living truth of life.**

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

AN earthly love can seldom inspire perfection.
Like a dying fire it no longer gives forth heat.
He who truly loves should not know rest, or
food, or sleep, through months or through years,
by day or by night.

I AM the chief frequenter of the tavern, I am
knee-deep in rebellion against Thy law. It is
I who the whole night through, soaked in wine,
cry the cry of my wounded heart into the ears
of God.

IF I were free to have my will in this worthless
world, how gladly would I choose never to
have come here, never to have lived here, never
to depart hence !

Do you know why at the dawn the cock
shrills his clarion ? It is to remind you by the
mirror of morning that a night has slipped
from your life, and left you still ignorant.

How long shall I fret over the have or have
not, or wonder if I should or should not pass
life pleasantly ? Nay, fill the cup, my cup-

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

bearer, for I do not know if I shall breathe out
the breath I now breathe in.

WE have gone, and the season sighs for our
going ; for out of a hundred pearls, but one
is thridded. Alas ! it is owing to the igno-
rance of mankind that a hundred thousand
noble thoughts remain unuttered.

SOMETIMES the draught of our life is clear,
sometimes turbid. Sometimes our robes are
wool, sometimes of silk. All that is nothing
to the illuminated soul ; but is it nothing to
die ?

THE drinker alone can understand the lan-
guage of the rose and of the vine. To those who
have no knowledge of hidden things ignorance
may be pardoned, for the drunkard only is
capable of tasting the delights which accom-
pany it.

CHOOSE ignorance, if you have wit, that you
may take the bowl from the drinkers of eternity.
But if you are ignorant, ignorance is not for

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

you. It is not given to all the ignorant to taste the sweets of ignorance.

WITH the Koran in one hand and the cup in the other, we are lured now to the lawful, now to the unlawful delight. Thus it comes to pass that under the spangled bowl we are neither all faithful nor all faithless.

BE wise, my fair, and lighten the load of your lover, for your beauty will not endure. Like all the world, your feet will go down to the dust.

THANKS to the cupbearer, breath to me remains, but in life's fellowship discontent remains. Of yester evening's wine only a flagon remains, but I know not how much of life yet remains.

DO not wear the weight of the world, do not sorrow your soul for those who have passed away. Give not your heart save to the fairest of the fair. Never want good wine, nor waste your life on the wind.

THE roses are full in blossom, my cupbearer ; bring wine and leave your prayers, my cup-

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

bearer ; ere yet death's angel rises up against us, rejoice awhile with the beloved, my cup-bearer.

ALAS that it is the ignorant who possess the bread well baked—the incomplete who possess complete riches ! The eyes of the beautiful girls are the joy of the heart, and it is mere knaves who are their owners.

BE welcome, solace of my soul, I can scarcely believe that you are here. Drink, for God's love, if not for mine, drink wine till I can doubt your being.

IN this world of dust from corner to corner, the wisdom of the wisest will see no better fruit of the faithless earth than wine and fair women.

DEAR wine, I would drink so deep of thy divinity that those beholding me should blend my being with thine, and say, "Angel of wine, whence comest thou ? "

THAT ominous wheel whose trade it is to play the tyrant has never cut for any one the knot

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

of any perplexity. Where'er it sees a bleeding heart it speeds to grind upon the open wound.

THERE are those who have never passed white nights in the search after truth, who have never thought beyond their narrow lives. These you may see clothed in the garments of the great and disparaging the walker in the perfect way.

I COULD not live without wine ; I could not bear the body's burden but for the juice of the vine. I am the slave of that sweet moment when the cupbearer offers me yet another draught, and I am too drunk to take it.

SINCE you know the secrets, fair youth, why so racked with despairing doubts ? Though the wheel of life does not turn to your pleasure still be merry in this hour, while yet you draw breath.

REMOVE all things save wine. A mouthful of wine is better than the empire of Feridoun. The tile which covers the winejar is more precious than the crown of Kai-Khosrou.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

NEVER has the wheel of Heaven favoured me,
never have I listened to a sweet voice, never
have I tasted a fleeting happiness, but therefor
I have been overwhelmed in an abyss of woe.

RELIGION only insists on your fulfilling your
obligation to the Deity. Refuse not bread to
the hungry, stay your tongue from slander,
render no evil to your neighbour, and I myself
promise you the future life. Bring hither the
wine !

NEVER sorrow a joyous heart, nor jar with
torment one moment of delight. Since none
can say what is to come, my desires are wine,
a beloved, and lazy ease.

O THOU whom all creation seeks in despair,
the dervish and the rich man alike find no way
to reach unto Thee. Thy name is in the mouth
of all men, but all are deaf. Thou art present
to all eyes, but all are blind.

THERE are those who in their madness are
fallen into the depths of pride, others who
abandon themselves to the quest of houris and

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

heavens. When at last the veil is drawn it will be revealed that they all have fallen far from Thee.

O WHEEL of Heaven, you slay my soul with sadness, you rend my garb of joy, you change the air I breathe into water, the water I drink into earth.

FROM afar came one foul-favoured, swathed about as in smoke of hell, sexless, horrible ! He broke our flagon, spilling the red wine, and boasted that the deed was glorious.

IT is better to cheer one sad soul than to people a world. It is braver to bind one free man with charity than to loose a thousand bond slaves.

FRIENDSHIP is vain in this juggling house of life ; be wise and trust none. Bear your pains, seek no remedy, be cheerful in your sorrows, and seek not to share them with others.

To the wise reader in the book of life, joy,

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

sorrow, weal, and woe are all alike. Since well and ill alike must end, it matters little whether our portion be good or evil.

WEEP not for this bustling world, call for wine and for your dear, for that through which man passed yesterday, he seeks to enter again to-day.

THOU whose essence is unknowable, Thou who heedest neither our faults nor our virtues, I am drunk with sin, but my trust in Thy clemency makes me sober.

THE wheel of the heavens only increases our woes. She gives nothing to us that she does not instantly snatch away. If those who have not yet come into the world knew the miseries which await them, truly they would never come.

LULLED by vain hope, I scattered my life to the winds before I had known one day of enjoyment. I fear now that fleeting time will not repay me for the days that are past.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

SINCE Thy mercy is vouchsafed to me, I have no fear for my sins ; since Thou possessest all goodness, I need not be anxious to provide myself for the journey. The leaves of the book have no terrors for me, since Thy clemency has cleared my countenance.

HAPPY is he who goes through life unknown, who has never worn the garb of hypocrisy, who like a sage is translated to the skies, instead of biding like an owl among the ruins of this world.

I MET a hermit in the desert. He was neither heretic nor believer ; he had neither riches, nor creed, nor truth, nor law, nor knowledge. Where is the man of like courage in this world or the other world ?

LISTEN to me, you who have not yet seen your friends' feet grow old. Vex not yourself about the wheel of Heaven, be content with what you have, and placidly behold how life juggles with the destinies of men.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

THEY preach to us of a Paradise, peopled with houris, flowing with wine. Then it must be lawful to love wine and women here, since such is the goal to which our existence tends.

ARE you full of heaviness ? Take a grain of hashish, or a measure of rose-coloured wine. You are become a sage—you drink not this, you take not that ! Nothing is left to you but to eat pebbles—go and eat them then.

IF you find fame in a town, you are slandered. If you live in a corner, you are condemned. The best thing for any man, were he a saint or a prophet, would be to live knowing no one, known of no one.

HEAVEN is a bowl inverted over our heads. The wise are weak and weary, but the cup and jar are sworn lovers. They are lip to lip, though blood flows between them.

ALAS ! my heart can find no comfort, my soul is on the point of passing from my lips, without having attained its desire. Alas ! my life has

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

passed without knowledge, and the essence of love remains unknown.

WHAT dweller on the earth has ever embraced a fair one with rose-tinted cheeks, who has not first received some thorn in the heart from time ? Behold this comb : before it can be suffered to touch the hair of beauty, it has to be hacked into a ridge of teeth.

How is it that grapes are sour at first, and after sweet ? How is it that wine is sweet and bitter ? If a knife can fashion a bit of wood into a viol, how is it that the same knife can fashion a lute ?

IF you can understand the orbit of this wheel, you must perceive two kinds of men—those who know good and evil, and those who know neither themselves nor aught else.

ALAS ! fate will not let me live near you, yet I cannot bear to live a hair's breadth away from you. I dare not share my woes with any one. Oh, sad lot, strange sorrow, sweet passion !

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

WHY have the lily and the cypress such fair fame among men ? Because the lily with ten tongues is silent ; because the cypress with a hundred hands keeps them from picking and stealing.

DRINK wine, since you are cooped beneath the vault of this luckless world. If everything from first to last be earth, at least bear yourself as if you still walk on the earth, not as if you were already laid beneath it.

VAINLY you rave of rose-red lips, vainly you whisper of the sweetness of wine and the dear madness of music. Be God my witness that till you cut the ties of earth your existence is vanity.

NOT for one hour can I forget the world, not for one moment can I buy content. Long have I served in the school of sorrow, and yet am master neither of this world nor the next.

SINCE it is the fate of man upon this earth to feed his soul on sorrow, he must be accounted

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

happy who passes swiftly from the world, but
he most happy who never comes into the world.

WHAT have I done to you, little wheel, that thus,
beaten and persecuted, I should be driven by
you to beg my bread from town to town and
draw my draught from the dancing water ?

O MY beloved, full of graces, sit by me and
quench the flame of a thousand desires. You
forbid me to gaze upon you, but you might as
well command me turn down the cup without
spilling the wine.

SEEK the company of men of wisdom, and fly a
thousand leagues from a man without wit. If
a wise man give thee poison, fear not to drink
thereof. If a fool offer thee an antidote, spill
it upon the earth.

MY well-beloved—may her days be long as my
sorrows !—is kind to me again. She cast upon
me a fond and fleeting glance, and vanished,
saying, “Let me do good and cast it on the
water.”

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

IN the kingdom of hope win all the hearts you can, in the kingdom of the presence bind to yourself a perfect soul, for, be sure, a hundred shrines of earth and water are not worth one heart. Give then your shrine the go-by, and seek a heart instead.

O WHEEL of fate, doom follows your unconquerable hate. Tyranny has been your purpose and pleasure from the dawn of time. And you too, O earth, if we dug into your breast, what treasures should we not find therein !

NEVER, alas ! do we drink with joy one drop of water without draining the bitter bowl from the hand of sorrow. Never do we savour bread with salt without feeding upon our own hearts.

CLASP the Koran with one hand, clutch the cup with the other, and shiver between the lawful and the unlawful. Thus we lie beneath the loyal sky neither wholly faithful nor wholly unfaithful.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

WE learn that we should keep our secrets from the indiscreet, even from the nightingale. Think then, O Heaven, upon the harm you do to human things in forcing them thus to hide from each other's eyes.

WITH cup in hand I lingered among the flowers, and yet not one of all my wishes has been fulfilled. But although wine has not led me to the goal of my desires, I will not go from that way, for when the wise man follows a road he turns not back again.

WE are the slaves of love. The devout are otherwise. We are ants, and Solomon is otherwise. We wear faces wan with love, we wear tattered garments, and the way of the world is otherwise.

IN the ways of the soul you must walk with understanding. About the things of this world you must keep silence. Though you have ears, eyes, and tongue, you must be as if you had them not.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

ROSE, you are like a lovely face. Rose, you are like a perfect ruby. O shifting fortune, every second you seem strange to me, yet you are like a familiar friend.

OPEN Thy gate, for only Thou canst open it.
Show me Thy road, for only Thou canst show it.
I will hold out no hand to those who would help me, for Thou alone art the eternal helper.

I DRINK of the wine, and its enemies come about me bidding me renounce it, saying that wine is the foe of religion. But because I am an adversary of the faith, I wish to drink wine, for it is lawful to drink the blood of one's enemy.

HEART, my heart, when you sit at the feet of the beloved, you have lost yourself to find yourself. When you have quaffed the wine of nothingness, you are set apart from those that are and those that are no more.

HEART, my heart, you will never spell the secret,

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

you will never win the wisdom of the wise.
Make for yourselves a heaven here with wine,
for who knows how you may relish the higher
heaven ?

A SHEIKH said to a harlot, "You are drunk;
each moment you are caught in some one's
nets." She answered unto him, "O Sheikh, I
am all that you call your servant, but are you
all you appear to be ?"

DO not value your life above sixty years. Do
not go anywhere without being intoxicated.
So long as your skull is not made into a jar, do
not set the gourd from your shoulders nor the
cup from your hand.

REACH me tulip-tinted wine, pour the blood of
the vine from the throat of the flagon, for
where in these days that pass shall I find so true
a friend as the wine-cup ?

O THOU who knowest man's hidden thoughts,
and upholdest the weak, heed my pleading.
Thou who canst give me strength to renounce,

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

heed my pleading. Thou who art the strength
of all men, heed my pleading.

ON that day of days which men call restful,
disdain the cup and drink your wine from a
larger measure. If you pledge other days with
a single draught, this day drink twice, for it is
indeed the day of days.

I SEE no smoke arise from the fire of my sins.
I expect a fairer fate from no man. If the
injustice of men makes me lift my hand to my
head, I find no solace in laying it on the hem
of their garments.

THOUGH heaven and earth were hurled together,
though all the splendour of the stars went out,
I would wait in your path, O beloved, and ask
you why you have taken away my life.

ALTHOUGH I have never pierced the pearl of
obedience, although I have never swept the
dust from Thy steps, I do not despair of reaching
the throne of Thy mercy, for I have never
importuned Thee with prayers.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

THE temples of all the gods are places of praise.
All chiming of bells, all hymns, are praise of
the All-powerful. The pulpit, the church, the
beads, the cross, are but symbols of the same
homage to the same Lord.

LONG have I sung the praise of wine and lived
in its service. May you be happy, my philo-
sopher, in the belief that you have taken
wisdom for your master ; but learn, too, that
your master is only my pupil.

HE who, in this world, possesses half a loaf,
and can shelter himself in any nest ; he who is
neither the master nor the slave of any man,
tell him his lot is sweet, and he should live con-
tent therein.

ONLY your drunkenness makes you dread death
and nothingness. It is clear that from nothing-
ness the tree of immortality shall spring. Since
my soul has been renewed by the breath of
Heaven, eternal death has fled from me.

ONE drop of wine is worth a thousand king-

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

doms. The tile which covers the jar is worth a thousand lives. The cloth with which we wipe lips moistened with wine is more precious than a thousand pieces.

THERE is no shield to save you from the stroke of destiny. Glory, gold, silver, each avails not. The more I ponder on this world and its way the more I am assured that to be good is all; the rest avails not.

I PITY the heart that is not prompted to abstinence, for it is the prey of passions. Only the heart that is free from care can be truly happy. Aught in excess of that state is mere vexation.

HE who has the wisdom to win a contented heart has lost no hour in sorrow. He has either consoled himself by seeking the grace of God, or he has gained tranquillity of soul over the laughing wine-cup.

To drink and to make merry is my way of life.
To pay no heed to heretic or devotee is my

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

way of life. I asked the bride of all the human race, "What is your way of life?" And she answered, smiling, "The joy of your heart lives in my way of life."

NO day ever finds my soul free from wonder,
no night ever finds my eyes free from tears.
The care that sways me forbids the cup of my
head from brimming with wine. Alas ! how
shall an inverted cup be filled ?

POOR man, thy passion, like a watch-dog, utters
hollow sounds. It covets the wiles of the fox ;
it seeks the sleep of the hare ; it blends in one
the rage of the tiger with the hunger of the
wolf.

WHO led you here this night to me, thus
drenched with wine? Who, lifting up your
light veil, guided you to my threshold? Who
swept you away more swiftly than the wind,
fanning the flame that burnt so hotly in your
absence?

O you who are the dearest thing in all the

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

world, more precious than my soul or than my eyes, there is nothing, O my beloved, dearer than life, and yet you, ah ! you are a hundred times more dear.

SINCE this world withers I will give myself up to pleasure and wine. Vainly men say unto me, "Hath not God forbidden it ?" He can truly never have given me this commandment, for if He had I could not obey it !

WHEN I observe the way of the world, I see undeserving mankind seizing on all its good things, while to me, O all-powerful God, nothing is vouchsafed but the shipwreck of my hopes.

IF I drink wine it is not for mine own gratification, for riot's sake, or to hold aloof from religion. No, it is but that I may escape for a moment from myself. No other purpose spurs me to drink and be drunken.

FOLK say that there is a hell, speaking in error ; for if there were a hell for lovers and

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

drinkers, why, Heaven would be to-morrow as empty as the hollow of my hand.

IF you have drunk wine all the week, do not abstain on the Sabbath ; for, by our faith, there is no difference between one day and another. Worship the All-high, and not the days of the week.

DEAR God, you are mercy, and mercy is pity. Why should one sinner be shut off from Paradise ? If you only pardon me because I have obeyed you, what mercy is that ? It would be merciful to forgive me, who am a sinner.

IF we have not the rose, do not the thorns remain ? If we have not the light, does not the fire remain ? If we have not the garment, the temple, nor the priest, do not the mosque, the dome, the minaret remain ?

WHERE are the dancers ? Where may I honour the flagon ? Happy is the heart which remembers the wine in the morning. Three

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

things in this world are dear to me—a head dizzy with wine, a fair mistress, and the sound of singing.

O WHEEL of Heaven, heedless of bread and salt, you leave me ever naked as a fish. The wheel of the weaver weaveth clothes for men, therefore it is more charitable than thou, O wheel of Heaven.

O KHAYYAM, sad is his lot who lets his heart be vexed by earthly sorrows. Drink then to the lilt of the lute, drink wine in a crystal cup, drink before the crystal is dashed against a stone.

WHAT have I gained of the gear of this world ? Nothing. What has fleeting time left in my hands ? Nothing. I am the torch of joy, but I cease with the extinguished torch. I am the cup of Jamshid, but I cease with the broken cup.

To you this earthly vessel is big with a soul, like to a jasmin bearing blossoms of the Judas-

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

tree. So the clearness of the wine deceives me—it is clear water, big with living fire.

WHY, when to-day the rose of fortune blossoms, is the wine-cup missing from your hands ? Drink red wine, my friend, for time is a merciless fellow, and it is hard to find again a day like this.

THE month of Ramazan has come. The time of the wine and of our easy life has fallen far from us. Alas for the wine that waits in the jar, and the eyes of the fair women that burn for us in vain !

WE have come too late into this welter of life, and we have fallen below the level of mankind. Since life does not, alas ! move according to our desire, it were better it should cease ; for already we have reached satiety.

CLOUDS cover the face of the heavens, and rain patters on the sward. How could man live one second without wine ? This green before me

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

delights my eye, but whose eye will delight
in the grass which shall spring from my dust ?

FOR your love I am ready to accept all manner
of reproof, and if I break my vow, I will bear
the blame. Oh, if until the last day I should
endure the pain you cause me, the time would
seem but too short.

LORD of the lords of the earth, do you know
the days when wine delights the heart ? They
are in truth the Monday, the Tuesday, the
Wednesday, the Thursday, the Friday, the
Saturday, and the Sunday to boot.

HEEDLESS man, your body is nought. Yon
deep vault built up of seven heavens is nought.
Enjoy yourself in this kingdom of misrule, for
life is only a moment, and that moment itself
is nought.

HE who has spun the wheel of Heaven, what
wounds has He not made in the heart of man ?
What rose-coloured lips has He not buried in
the earth ? What musk-scented tresses has He
not hidden in the dust ?

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

O MY heart, act as if all the world were yours
—think that this house is decked for your de-
light in this distracted sphere. Say that you
rest here for but a few days, and will then arise
and depart.

HURRIED along by the flight of time, which
only bestows its gifts on the least worthy, my
life is overwhelmed with sorrow. In the
garden of mankind my heart is closed up like
the bud of a rose, and drenched with blood
like the tulip.

I AM more industrious than you, my sage of the
town. Though I be drunk, I am better than
you, for you drink human blood, and I the
blood of the vine. Be just, and pronounce
which of us two is the most sanguinary.

O MY soul, you and I are like a compass.
We form but one body, having two points.
Truly, one point moves from the other point,
and makes the round of the circle ; but the
day draws near when the two points must
reunite.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

To drink red wine in a fair cup is pleasing.
To hear the wedded melodies of lutes and harps
is pleasing. The fanatic who despises wine
and song is pleasing only when he is a thou-
sand miles away.

ALTHOUGH duty has led my feet to the mosque,
it is not to lift up my voice in prayer. I stole
a carpet one day from the mosque, and since it
is worn out, I have come here again and
again.

No longer allow this world to oppress your
souls. Give yourselves up to wine. Wine is
the blood of the world, and the world is our
murderer. How can we, then, refrain from
drinking the blood of him who has spilt ours ?

DRINK, my soul, to the memory of the idols
who enslave the heart of man. Wine is the
blood of the grape, my beloved, and the vine
says to you, "Drink of it, since I have lifted it
to your lips."

IN the season of flowers, drink rose-red wine to

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

the moan of the flute and the melody of the harp. I, for my part, drink and rejoice. If you will not drink, what is that to me ? Go, then, and eat stones.

WHEN I remember my offences the fire which of old burnt in my heart now reddens my face with shame. However, it is well known that a generous master will pardon the repented slave.

I AM a rebel : where is your will ? My heart is sinful : where is your control ? If you will only bestow Paradise on the submissive it is a debt which you pay, and where is your mercy ?

BELIEVE not that I fear the world, or that the thought of death fills me with terror. Since death is a truth, what have I to fear from it ? All that I fear is that my life has not been well spent.

SEE that you are never without wine, for wine fills the heart of man with wisdom. If the devil had tasted one drop thereof, he would

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

have bowed down before Adam two thousand times.

I WOULD sell the crown of the king to purchase the song of the flute girl. Let us sell the turban and the robe of silk for a cup of wine ; let us sell the chaplet of hypocrisy.

STRIKE the earth with your feet, while we beat time with our hands. Let us drink in the company of beauties with narcissus eyes. Gladness begins with the twentieth cup, and mellows with the sixtieth.

BRING hither the captain-jewel in a cup of crystal, bring hither the desired of the generous. Since you know that all men are dust, and that when the wind passes over them they are no more, bring hither the wine.

BEHOLD the little crowd of fools, who hold the world in their hands, and who in their folly think themselves the wisest of the wise. Vex not yourself, for in their content they call all men heretics who do not share their folly.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

How long will the faults of others flush our face with shame ? How long shall we waste in the furnace of this world ? Arise, and like a man cast aside this world's sadness. To-day at least is a day of rejoicing—let us drink rose-coloured wine.

MY soul is often saddened by the turn of the wheel of the skies. I struggle against myself. Oh that I had wisdom enough to hide myself for ever from this world, or to live therein without allowing it to possess my heart !

THE blood of the vine renews our youth, and the company of the fair. Since it was by water that this vain world was destroyed, all that is left for us is to drench ourselves with wine, and to pass our life in delicate drunkenness.

O WHEEL of Heaven, your revolving course displeases me. Set me free, for I am unworthy of your yoke. If your purpose always holds to grant your favours only to the fools in their folly, I am not over-wise nor over-learned.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

TAKE the cup and sing in the choir of the nightingales, for if it were seemly to drink without concord of harmony, the wine would make no sound in gurgling from the flagon.

SINCE God has promised us wine in Paradise, how can it be denied to us in this world? One day a drunken Arab severed with his sword the legs of a camel. It is for this that the Prophet has declared wine forbidden.

SINCE only memory remains of all your past delights, since your only faithful friend is the wine-cup, rejoice in it, and let not the cup escape from your hands.

IN this mad world of medley hasten to gather some flowers. Sit in the seats of laughter, and press the cup to your lips. Heaven is heedless of sin or service, so make merry after your heart's desire.

My love burns with its fiercest flame. The beauty of my tyrant is beyond praise. My

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

heart prompts, but my tongue refuses speech.
I am racked with thirst, and yet a fresh stream
flows before me.

How long will you remain the dupe of this
world's dyes and odours ? When will you
cease to trouble about the good and the bad ?
Were you the fountain of youth, were you the
water of life, that should not save you from
sinking into earth.

THOSE that have gone before us, O cupbearer,
are lapped in the dust of pride, O cupbearer ;
drink, then, your wine, and hear my truth ; the
words they whispered were but wine, O cup-
bearer.

POUR me that flower-coloured wine, my cup-
bearer ; pour, for my soul is laden with sorrow,
my cupbearer ; pour, I say, for, in freeing me
from myself, it frees me also from the cares of
this world, my cupbearer.

THAT palace which touched the heavens,
before whose door kings bowed the head, we

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

saw the ringdove on its battlements perching,
and moaning, "Coo ! coo ! coo ! coo !"

A FIG for mosques, prayers, fastings ! go to
the tavern and get drunk, even if you have
to beg your liquor. Drink, my Khayyam, for
soon your clay will be moulded into bowls and
jars.

THANKS to you, mirror-moon of heaven, thanks
to the misgiven favours of this fleeting time,
my cheeks are hollow cups brimming with
tears, and my heart is a jar running over with
blood.

Lo, light and wine, and the mirror-moon, my
cupbearer ; lo, the beauty lovelier than the
captain-jewel, my cupbearer ; cast not this
burning heart to earth or to the wind ; bring
drink, my cupbearer.

ALL that you say of me is steeped in hate, you
call me unbeliever, atheist. I am what I am,
and make no secret of it ; but is it just for you
to rail at me ?

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

BEFORE you drain the cup of death, before time's wheel has stopped your breath, get goods and gear while you are here, for surely in the lower land no welcome has the empty hand.

I HAVE swept the threshold of the tavern with my hair ; I have given the good-by to thoughts of the two worlds. When I am drunk, they might both roll into a ditch, without my heeding them more than two barleycorns.

GREET Khayyam from me and question Khayyam, When have I said that wine is lawful ? To the foolish it is unlawful, but to the wise it is lawful.

WE made the mouth of a jar our place of prayer ; the rose-red wine made us seem truly men. It is better to flourish in the street of the tavern than to wither in the mosque.

BE resigned to sorrow if you would escape it. Do not complain of your hurts if you would have them healed. If you would taste the joy

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

of wealth, then thank Providence for your poverty.

IN the kitchen of life you smell only the smoke. How long will you sorrow over being and not being ? This world is loss to those who cling to it. Throw it aside, and lo ! the loss is gain.

ARE you wise enough to learn the truth ? Man is a miserable being moulded from the mud of sorrow. A little while he eats upon this earth, then lifts his foot to depart.

THE world is a body. Justice is its soul. The angels are its senses, the skies its elements, humanity its limbs. This is the eternal unity. All else is vanity.

A DROP of water sorrowed to be sundered from the ocean. Ocean smiling said, "We are all in all, God is within and around us, and we are divided but by an imperceptible line."

IF you delight in darkening the free heart,

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

wear mourning for your wits your whole life long, and be accursed for the fool you are.

THOUGH I have no wish to vex you in your sleep, to shock the night with your despairing cries, do not pride yourself either on your wealth or your comeliness, for a single hour may carry them both away.

IF in this life you feasted well, what then ? Suppose your latest day has come, what then ? If you have lived and yet may live a hundred hundred happy years, what then ?

WOE's me for wasted life, forbidden pleasures, and dishonoured bodies ! My face is blackened for not doing what Thou hast ordered. How, then, if I had done what Thou hast not ordered ?

ON the day when I lift a cup of wine, and in the joy of my heart drink myself drunk, then in that happy hour a hundred miracles become clear and words as limpid as water explain the mystery of things.

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

WE are drowned in love to-day, in the temple we pay homage to wine to-day, severed from our very being we shall touch the threshold of the eternal throne to-day.

SINCE every day is but two halting-places, drink your fill of wine, for you will never regain your lost hours. Since this world drives swiftly to its doom, imitate it yourself, and day and night seek the annihilation of wine.

IT is I who, in this ruined tavern, surrounded by drinkers and dancers, have staked, for their sakes, soul and heart, and all down to my very drinking-cup. Thus I free myself from hope of heaven and from fear of hell. Thus am I above earth, air, fire, and water.

ONLY a breath divides falsehood and truth. Only a breath divides belief from doubt. Let us then make merry while we still draw breath, for only a breath divides life from death.

THOUGH the clouds are veiling the faces of the roses, the desire of drink is still unquenched

QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM

within my heart. Seek not yet your couch, for the time has not come. Drink, beloved of my soul, for the sun has not yet slipped below the horizon.

O my friends, when I am sped, appoint a meeting, and when ye have met together, be ye glad thereof ; and when the cupbearer holds in her hand a flagon of old wine, then think upon old Khayyam and drink to his memory.

•

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

I, NAMED Nizami, child of Samarcand,
The holy place whose towers aspire to heaven,
Whose domes are blue as heaven's inverted
cup,
The consecrated shrine, head of Islam,
Whose heart is at Meccah, the happy spot
Where bloom the gardens of the Heart's
Delight,
Where in the house upon the Shepherd's Hill,
Wise men pursue the pathway of the stars—
I, even Nizami, write this record down
In God's name, merciful, compassionate,
A proof of his compassion.

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

When my youth

Burned in my body like a new-fed flame,
When wisdom seemed an easy flower to pluck,
And knowledge fruit that ripens in a day—
Ah me ! that merry When so long ago—
I was a pupil of that man of men,
Omar, the Tent-Maker of Naishapur,
That is Khorassan's crown, Omar the wise,
Whose wisdom read the golden laws of life,
And made them ours for ever in his songs,
Omar the star-gazer.

One day by chance,

I taxing all my student's store of wit
With thought of is and is not, good and bad,
And fondly dreaming that my fingers soon
Would close upon the key of heaven and earth,
I met my master in a garden walk,
Musing as was his wont, I knew not what,
Perhaps some better mode of marshalling
Those daily soldiers of the conquering years,
Perchance some subtler science which the stars
Ciphered in fire upon the vaulted sky
For him alone, perchance on some rare rhymes
Pregnant with mighty thoughts, or on some
girl,

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Star-eyed and cypress-slender, tulip-cheeked
And jasmine-bosomed, for he loved such well,
And deemed it wisdom.

Omar saw me not,
And would have passed me curtained in his
thoughts ;
But I, perked up with youthful consequence
At mine own wisdom, plucked him by the
sleeve,
And with grave salutation, as befits
The pupil to the master, stayed his course
And craved his patience.

Omar gazed at me
With the grave sweetness which his servants
loved,
And gave me leave to speak, which I, on fire
To tell the thing I thought, made haste to do,
And poured my babble in the master's ear . . .
Of solving human doubt.

When I had done,
And, panting, looked into my master's eyes
To read therein approval of my plan,
He turned his head, and for a little while
Waited in silence, while my petulant mind
Galloped again the course of argument

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

And found no flaw, all perfect.

Still he stood
Silent, and I, the riddle-reader, vexed
At long-delayed approval, touched again
His sleeve, and with impatient reverence
Said,

“Master, speak, that I may garner up
In scented manuscripts the thoughts of price
That fall from Omar’s lips.”

He smiled again
In sweet forgiveness of my turbulent mood,
And with a kindly laughter in his eyes
He said,

“I have been thinking, when I die,
That I should like to slumber where the wind
May heap my tomb with roses.”

So he spoke,
And then with thoughtful face and quiet tread
He past and left me staring, most amazed
At such a pearl from such a sea of thought,
And marvelling that great philosophers
Can sometimes pay so little heed to truth
When truth is thrust before them. God be
praised !

I am wiser now, and grasp no golden key.

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Years came and went, and Omar passed away,
First from those garden walks of Samarcand
Where he and I so often watched the moon
Silver the bosoms of the cypresses,
And so from out the circle of my life,
And in due season out of life itself;
And his great name became a memory
That clung about me like the scent of flowers
Beloved in boyhood, and the wheeling years
Ground pleasure into dust beneath my feet ;
And so the world wagged till there came a day
When I that had been young and was not young,
I found myself in Naishapur, and there
Bethought me of my master dead and gone,
And the musk-scented preface of my youth.
Then to myself I said, " Nizami, rise
And seek the tomb of Omar."

So I sought,

And after seeking found, and, lo ! it lay
Beyond a garden full of roses, full
As the third heaven is full of happy eyes ;
And every wind that whispered through the
trees
Scattered a heap of roses on his grave ;
Yea, roses leaned, and from their odorous hearts

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Rained petals on his marble monument,
Crimson as lips of angels.

Straight my mind,
Sweeping the desert of departed years,
Leaped to that garden speech in Samarcand,
The cypress grove, my fretful questioning,
And the mild beauty of my master's face.
Then I knelt down and glorified Allah,
Who is compassionate and merciful,
That of his boundless mercy he forgave
This singing sinner ; for I surely knew
That all the leaves of every rose that dripped
Its tribute on the tomb where Omar sleeps,
Were tears and kisses that should smooth away
His record of offence ; for Omar sinned,
Since Omar was a man.

He wished to sleep
Beneath a veil of roses ; Heaven heard,
Forgave, and granted, and the perfumed pall
Hides the shrine's whiteness. Glory to Allah !

**PRESIDENT'S
SECRETARIAT
LIBRARY**